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Letter dated 7 January 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing to you in connection with the forthcoming item on the agenda of the Security Council, entitled "The situation in Croatia", dealing with the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP).

As members of the Security Council are aware, the root causes of the dispute over Prevlaka were the emerging security issues related to the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia and the Milosević regime's disrespect for the internationally recognized borders of the newly emerged States, coupled with its ambition of territorial expansion. However, in all Security Council resolutions and other United Nations resolutions, the territorial integrity of Croatia within its internationally recognized borders was never questioned. The Prevlaka issue was, therefore, exclusively perceived as a security question. The Republic of Croatia, throughout this period, tried to discuss ways to overcome the security concerns of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with the old regime in Belgrade, but to no avail. In this regard, we would like to restate that the Republic of Croatia is ready to solve all possible security concerns of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia through the demilitarization of the broader area on both sides of the border.

With the change of Government in Belgrade, bilateral talks have resumed. It is encouraging that the new authorities share the view that, after the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, the borders of the republics which have become independent represent international borders and should be respected. In this respect, an Inter-State Commission was established in December 2001 in order to work jointly on the identification of the land border and the delimitation of the sea border. We hope that this Inter-State Commission will be able to start its work as soon as possible, in good faith, with the aim of completing its task in the shortest period of time.

The Republic of Croatia commends the work of UNMOP and we are grateful for its contribution through the monitoring of the demilitarization. Greater confidence-building and stability in the region have been created by enhanced freedom of movement on the peninsula as a result of the opening of the border crossings of Debeli Brijeg and Konfin, pursuant to the agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the authorities of Montenegro. Bilateral relations between the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are steadily improving as well, and since the security situation in Prevlaka does not

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represent a threat to peace and security in the region anymore, the members of the Security Council should consider ending the mandate of UNMOP. Moreover, we are confident that, with the positive attitude of the new Government in Belgrade, the two countries are ready to conclude this issue successfully. Meanwhile, a transitional border regime could also be agreed upon.

In this regard and in good faith, taking also into account the stage of the process of defining the status of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its republics, the Republic of Croatia is ready to accept the last extension of the UNMOP mandate for the next six months. We invite the members of the Security Council to declare that the UNMOP mandate will terminate on 15 July 2002, to support the demilitarization of the area on both sides of the border and to stress the need for the swift finalization of the work of the Inter-State Commission for the identification of the land border and the delimitation of the sea border.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ivan **Šimonović**
Permanent Representative